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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers from a symposium on management assessment. In "The Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) Selection System as a Predictor of Leadership" (Orlando V. Griego, George A. Morgan, Gary D. Geroy), 102 ROTC cadets rated their own leadership characteristics and were rated by subordinates; leaders and subordinates did not view leadership consistently. "Moderators of Managerial Behavior Ratings: An Analysis from Multiple Perspectives" (Allan H. Church) reports on a multirater feedback effort that collected data from managers, subordinates, colleagues, and supervisors to identify trends in managerial behavior ratings and determine the effectiveness of multirater feedback. "A Case Study: Employee Perceptions of the Efficacy of 360 Degree Feedback at a Large Midwestern Utility" (Norm Bilsbury) found unanimous agreement among associates but not managers that 360 degree feedback supports organizational objectives. (KC)

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29 **Management Assessment**

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Orlando V. Griego, Colorado State University
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Moderators of Managerial Behavior Ratings: An Analysis from Multiple Perspectives
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The Air Force ROTC Selection System as a Predictor of Leadership

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This study analyzed the Air Force ROTC Selection System as a predictor of leadership. Air Force ROTC utilizes a national selection system for entry into their program. For this study, 102 junior and senior cadets, at two ROTC units in Colorado, rated their own leadership characteristics. In turn, they were rated by at least two or more subordinates. This study found several predictors of leadership as determined by the Multifactor Officer Questionnaire (MOQ).

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps' (AFROTC) Professional Officer Course (POC) Selection System as a predictor of leadership. AFROTC utilizes a national selection system for entry into the Professional Officer Course training program. The selection system was developed, in part, by the recruiting branch of the Air Force as well as from research in an effort to determine graduation success (Cowen, Barrett, & Wegner, 1990). However, the role of AFROTC is to develop leadership. In fact, the motto of AFROTC is "leadership begins here." The AFROTC program produces most of the leaders for the Air Force and is comparable to many other military leadership programs in attempting to develop leadership qualifications. Many organizations in business, education, and government also operate leadership development programs. It is important that leadership be effectively developed by such programs. Therefore, understanding the selection criteria for such programs and whether they are significant predictors of leadership is vital. The focus of the study was transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership incorporates and moves beyond transactional leadership. The transformational leader stimulate followers to surpass initial performance goals and self-interests by generating commitment to designated outcomes using four characteristics--charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1985). Subordinates place considerable confidence and trust in the transformational leader. A transformational leader possessing these four characteristics can provide vision and a sense of meaning toward achieving goals. Extensive surveys of major corporations, government agencies, and military organizations showed transformational leadership contributes to overall organizational effectiveness. Subordinates claimed they put forth extra effort for such leaders (see Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985). Such extra effort meant increased productivity, effectiveness, and efficacy. In addition, extensive research on combat officers noted that transformational leaders were seen as more charismatic and, consequently, more effective than combat officers that were not viewed accordingly (Waldman & Bass, 1986). This is especially significant to Air Force ROTC since the purpose of the organization is to develop leadership ability in preparation for armed conflict.

A transformational leader possessing charisma provides vision and a sense of meaning toward achieving goals, instills pride, and earns respect and trust from subordinates. Inspirational leadership involves the communication of high expectations, use of symbols to focus efforts, and express important purposes in simple ways. Intellectual stimulation refers to leaders who promot intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving processes while viewing difficulties as problems to be solved not avoided. Leaders who provide individualized consideration, give personal attention to subordinates, treat people with respect, and coach, mentor, and advise followers, are considered transformational in nature. Transformational leaders tend to be proactive rather than reactive, more creative, greater risk-takers, and view problems as challenges and opportunities. In general, followers state they exert extra effort for transformational leaders (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership, moreover, refers to leadership that transforms the outlook and behavior of followers by generating awareness and acceptance beyond their own self-interests toward the good of the group, and a process where leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders raise the consciousness of

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followers about the importance and value of shared goals. Reciprocally, leaders improve to a higher level of motivation. The heightened level of motivation for followers is associated with leaders who possessed characteristics of charisma, inspiration, individualized consideration to followers, and intellectual stimulation that aroused subordinates (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985; Hunt, 1984; Yammarino & Bass, 1990).

Transactional and Laissez-faire leadership. Transactional leaders focus primarily on the social exchange nature of leader-subordinate relationships. In other words, transactional leaders implicitly and explicitly contract with followers in exchange for rewards (Bass, 1990). The typical leader approach is transactional in nature because he or she appeals to subordinate's needs and decides their goals. For Bass (1985) and Yammarino and Bass (1990), transactional leadership is associated with four factors--contingent rewards via promises, contingent rewards via rewards, active manage-by-exception, and passive manage-by-exception. These four factors are components of transactional leadership and attempt to promote follower self-interest, routine performance, and general organizational goals either actively or passively.

More management-based in nature, transactional leaders have been seen as less effective in organizations than transformational leaders. Followers stated they exerted less effort for such practices compared to transformational leadership methods (Bass, 1985). There is a greater payoff for organizations, and subordinates in the organization, if the leadership is viewed as possessing vision, arousing confidence, and establishing commitment.

Burns (1978), after extensive work on leadership, expressed the belief that transactional and transformational leadership were bipolarties at two ends of the same continuum. Bass (1985), on the other hand, argued and demonstrated (Waldman & Bass, 1986) that transformational leadership built on transactional leadership. However, according to these authors, transactional leadership did not build on transformational. This led to the contention that transformational had a greater impact on outcomes and impact in organizations. This is important for two reasons. First, the success or failure of any organization depends on leader and follower commitment toward goal attainment. Second, the study of impact and outcomes reveals much about the leadership process (Clark, Clark, & Campbell, 1992). It tells what behaviors produce successful follower responses and what conditions moderate or accentuate such influences. Transformational leadership, therefore, is to be desired in any organization wishing to be more effective and accomplished. Transactional models center on the followers' perception and expectation about the leader's actions and motives. Transactional leadership is viewed as contingent reinforcement or, in other words, rewards provided for certain performance level achievement. In its less active form, transactional leadership is closer to management or contingent negative reinforcement.

Laissez-faire leadership is the absence of leadership. Scholars agree the absence of leadership has negative implications for goal attainment, motivation, organizational performance, as well as for other organizational and individual performance areas (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

Research Questions

Some of the significant research questions this study addressed were:

1.Which independent variables in the ROTC Selection System predicted transformational leadership (charisma, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational leadership)?

2.Which independent variables in the ROTC Selection System predicted contingent rewards transactional leadership (contingent rewards using promises and contingent rewards using rewards)?

3.Which independent variables in the ROTC Selection System predicted manage-by-exception transactional leadership (active manage-by-exception and passive manage-by-exception)?

4.Which independent variables in the Professional Officer Course Selection System predicted laissez-faire leadership?

5.Were follower evaluations and leader self-evaluations consistent predictors of contingent rewards transactional, management-by-exception transactional, and/or laissez-faire leadership?

6.Was gender a predictor in the assessment of transformational, contingent rewards transactional, management-by-exception transactional, and/or laissez-faire leadership?

7.Was ethnicity a predictor in the assessment of transformational, contingent rewards transactional, management-by-exception transactional, and/or laissez-faire leadership?

8.Was rank a predictor in the assessment of transformational, contingent rewards transactional, management-by-exception transactional, and/or laissez-faire leadership?

Methodology

The AFROTC Selection System includes cumulative grade point average, detachment commander ratings, verbal and quantitative scores from the Air Force Officer Qualifying Test (AFOQT), field training performance evaluations, and physical fitness tests. AFROTC national headquarters is responsible for the selection and training of candidates. AFROTC detachment programs, located at participating colleges and universities, utilize this selection system for entry into the POC.

Grade point average is a selection system standard. Entry into the POC requires a minimum GPA of 2.5 on course work. This average is calculated based on all college courses the candidate has taken, using a 0- to 4-point scale. A GPA of 4 is equivalent to an A average; 3 points to a B; etc. Failure to meet the minimum GPA can result in discharge from ROTC.

The AFOQT is a paper and pencil instrument with multiple choice test items designed for group administration under standardized conditions. The test contains 380 items, grouped into 16 subtests of 15 to 40 items each. The subtests are aggregated into five composites: pilot, navigator-technical, academic aptitude, verbal, and quantitative. The academic aptitude is actually the mean of both the verbal and quantitative scores. The pilot and navigator scores are a combination of verbal, quantitative, and aviation assessments. All AFOQT composite scores are reported in percentiles. A large number of pilot, navigator-technical, and academic aptitude scores overlap considerably with verbal and quantitative scores. Consequently, for this study, we only used the verbal and quantitative AFOQT scores as predictors to avoid the violation of muticollinearity (high correlation with other independent variables). High correlation between variables lessons the variance that can be accounted for in the statistical analysis. For this reason, AFOQT pilot and AFOQT navigator were eliminated as independent variables. Those two assessments share similar verbal, quantitative, and aviation questions. Moreover, AFOQT academic aptitude was a composite of AFOQT verbal and quantitative scores and would have been a redundant measure.

The detachment commander's rating is an overall rating of the acceptability of an applicant based on application information and, in some cases, a personal interview with the detachment commander. The commander usually consults with ROTC instructors who had previous contact with the candidate. Usually with other ROTC officers present, the commander uses a semistructured interview technique to ascertain the candidate's aptitude, motivation, attitude, background, and general suitability for a military officer career. The candidate is ranked by graduation date from highest (1) to lowest (number is dependent on the total graduating). For example, if there were 15 graduates, commander rankings, established by Air Force ROTC Headquarters edict, can only have a single number one ranking, a single number two ranking, and so forth until 15 is reached.

AFROTC field training (FT) is required of all cadets who are seeking membership into leadership positions. Field training is normally accomplished during the summer between the cadet's sophomore and junior years. Cadets who complete all Air Force ROTC courses attend a four or six week FT encampment depending on when they enter AFROTC. The FT encampments provided concentrated training in leadership, followership, drill and ceremonies, custom and courtesies, physical fitness training, and "officership". Field training is considered one of the more challenging experiences of ROTC. Upon completion, cadets received a training report which rates their overall performance from 0 (failure) to 4 (outstanding). In addition, they received the mean flight field training performance score for the sake of comparison. In other words, one cadet may have received a 3.0 but the flight average may have been 3.2; still another cadet may have received a 3.0 but the flight average was 2.7. Consequently, it was important that the field training scores be converted into Z-scores so they could be standardized for this study.

The Air Force ROTC physical fitness test (PFT) is comprised of five events which include pull-ups/flexed arm hang, standing long jump, sit-ups, push-ups, and 600 yard dash requiring minimum times, repetitions, or distances. All events are completed in 15 minutes or less with a minimum score of 180 for passing. The highest score possible is 500. The cadet is required to pass 4 of the 5 events in order to pass the PFT.

For this study, 102 junior and senior Air Force ROTC cadets, at two ROTC units in Colorado, rated their own transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership characteristics. In turn, each were rated by two or three subordinates on those same characteristics. This allowed for a 1 to 2.2 leader-subordinate ratio for testing. A total of 22 cadets in leadership roles participating in the study were female and 19 were minority. These two groups made for worthwhile analysis of gender and ethnicity as factors in leadership assessment.

Cadets in AFROTC are categorized into two areas. Freshman and sophomores are enrolled in the General Military Course (GMC) while juniors and seniors must earn entrance into the Professional Officer Course (POC). Freshman and sophomores generally assume follower roles and take courses that cover broad aspects of the Air Force and the historical development of airpower. Junior and senior level cadets are expected to assume leadership positions and study leadership skills as well as national defense policy.

This study addressed the predictability of each type of leadership from the Selection System using multiple regression. Such statistical analysis is a valid approach toward forecasting leadership from selection system variables. In addition, we looked at the relationship ratings of followers and leaders, whether there were demographic differences related to leadership and what types of leadership were most common. The types of leadership were transformational (charismatic, inspirational, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), transactional (contingent rewards via promises, contingent rewards via rewards, active manage-by-exception, passive manage-by-exception), and laissez-faire as determined by the Multifactor Officer Questionnaire (Bass & Yammarino, 1987).

The Multifactor Officer Questionnaire Forms 11R and 11S (Bass & Yammarino, 1987) is a slightly modified version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) originally developed by Bass (1985) and later refined by Avolio and Bass (1988). In Form 11, the number of scales is increased with a resulting reduction in the number of items per scale. What makes this assessment unique is the changes are better suited for the military setting. It is, basically, the MLQ with a penchant toward military jargon. This instrument successfully indicates transactional (four areas) and transformational (four areas) leadership with a manner that fits the military setting and language. Moreover, it also assesses if no leadership (laissez-faire) takes place. Respondents completing the questionnaire indicated how frequently they observed behaviors or reacted to those in leadership positions on a five-point format ranging from "not at all" (E = 0) to "frequently, if not always" (A = 4). For each scale, items were summed and divided by the appropriate number of items, yielding a composite scale score that ranges from zero to four.

There are nine leadership scales in this instrument. Four are transformational leadership scales, four transactional, and one laissez-faire. The four transformational leadership scales, the number of items in each, and examples of the items are:

1. Charisma (6 items): "I'm ready to trust him/her to overcome any obstacle."
2. Individualized Consideration (6 items): "Gives personal attention to me when necessary."
3. Intellectual Stimulation (6 items): "Shows me how to think about problems in new ways."
4. Inspirational Leadership (6 items): "Provides vision of what lies ahead."

The four transactional leadership scales, the number of items in each, and examples of the items are:

1. Contingent Rewards Using Promises (3 items): "Talks about special commendations and promotions for good work."
2. Contingent Rewards Using Rewards (3 items): "Personally pays me a compliment when I do good work."
3. Active Management-by-Exception (4 items): "Would reprimand me if my work were below standard."

4. Passive Management-by-Exception (4 items): "Shows he/she is a firm believer in 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'."

The one laissez-faire scale, the number of items in each, and example of the item is:

1. Laissez-faire (6 items): "However I do my job is OK with him/her."

Internal consistency reliability for this study was determined using Chronbach's alpha. This technique is versatile because it can be used with instruments made up of items that can be scored with three or more possible values. Overall, peer-evaluations had higher reliability measures (.69 to .97) than self-evaluations (.63 to .85). Nevertheless, the internal consistency reliability of the instrument ranged from adequate to strong.

Results and Conclusions

The Multifactor Officer Questionnaire Form 11R and 11S were delivered to 464 cadets. A total of 327 questionnaires out of 464 were collected as part of this study. That is, 70 percent of those asked to participate did so. From the two ROTC units, there were 116 in the Professional Officer Course (leaders) and 252 in subordinate positions. Of the 116 potential leaders, 102 completed the questionnaire for a response rate of 88 percent. A total of 348 subordinates were asked to evaluate superiors for this study. Exactly 225 cadets in subordinate positions returned peer-evaluations for a 65 percent return.

The majority of all cadets were European-American/Caucasian (83 percent) and male (74 percent). Among the participating subordinate cadets, 15 percent ($\underline{N}$ = 34) were minority and 28 percent ($\underline{N}$ = 63) were female. Among the participating cadet leaders, 18.6 percent ($\underline{N}$ = 19) were minority and 21.6 percent ($\underline{N}$ = 22) were female.

As noted in Table 1, this study revealed several predictors of leadership as measured by the Multifactor Officer Questionnaire. Charismatic leadership was predicted significantly from self-evaluations. Those rated high on field training evaluations in combination with low grade point averages rated themselves relatively charismatic. Subordinate evaluations indicated that low scores on the AFOQT verbal and high scores on the AFOQT quantitative combined with high field training ratings were significant predictors of charismatic leadership. The data also indicated that field training evaluations were predictive of self-evaluated leadership that uses individualized consideration.

Subordinate evaluation of leaders who did well on the AFOQT quantitative but relatively poorly on the AFOQT verbal were perceived as active manage-by-exception leaders (e.g., "Would reprimand me if my work were below standard"). There were two significant predictors of subordinates' evaluations of passive manage-by-exception (e.g., "Shows he/she is a firm believer in 'if it ain't broken don't fix it'")–high AFOQT verbal scores and low detachment commander ranking. In addition, those cadet leaders who scored well on the AFOQT verbal test perceived themselves as more laissez-faire.

The study also sought to determine if subordinate evaluations and self-evaluations were consistent. Cadet leaders rated themselves significantly more favorably on all positive leadership characteristics and low on negative ones compared to subordinate ratings. There were no significant correlations between self and subordinate ratings. However, leaders and subordinates were consistent in the type of leadership they said was exhibited. Both groups indicated two transformational leadership characteristics (charisma and individualized consideration) and one transactional leadership characteristic (contingent rewards using rewards) were most often applied, though they did not agree to the order. Leader self-assessments were inflated above subordinates, but both groups still had above average leadership ratings on a Likert one to five scale in those three leadership traits exhibited.

Gender, ethnicity, and rank were looked at as predictors of leadership. However, there were no significant differences in the perceived leadership style of men and women or of minorities and Caucasians by themselves or subordinates. rank of leaders (Cadet Colonel to Cadet Lieutenant) is similar in four areas to those outlined in Tables 4.5 through 4.10 with only minor changes. There are, however, two differences. The similar predictors are as follows: 1) Field training is significantly and positively associated with charisma on self-evaluations while GPA is significantly and negatively associated; 2) AFOQT verbal is significantly and negatively associated

with peer evaluations of charisma while both AFOQT quantitative and field training are significantly and positively associated; 3) AFOQT verbal is significantly and positively associated with passive manage-by-exception after peer evaluations while detachment commander ranking is significantly and negatively associated; 4) AFOQT verbal is significantly and positively associated with self-evaluations of laissez-faire.

Table 1
Summary Table Showing Significant Betas for Independent Variables with the Leadership Dependent Variables

Leadership Assessment	Verbl. AFOQT	Quant. AFOQT	Cmdr. Rating	Field Trng.	GPA	Phys. Fit.
Transformation						
Charisma-self	–	–	–	.33	-.21	–
Charisma-peer	-.29	.27	–	.23	–	–
Individualized Consideration-self	–	–	–	.34	–	–
Individualized Consideration-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–
Intellectual Stimulation-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Intellectual Stimulation-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–
Inspirational Leadership-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Inspirational Leadership-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–
Transactional						
Contingent. Rewards, Promises-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Contingent Rewards, Promises-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–
Contingent Rewards, Rewards-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Contingent Rewards, Rewards-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–
Manage.-by-Exception, Active-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Manage.-by-Exception , Active-peer	-.32	.28	–	–	–	–
Manage.-by-Exception, Passive-self	–	–	–	–	–	–
Manage.-by-Exception ,Passive-peer	.24	–	-.27	–	–	–
Nonleadership						
Laissez-faire-self	.35	–	–	–	–	–
Laissez-faire-peer	–	–	–	–	–	–

$p < .05$

How This Research Contributes to New Knowledge in HRD

No research has been published that determines if the Air Force ROTC Selection System predicts leadership. Since the purpose of ROTC is to develop future leaders, it is reasonable to analyze a selection system that may be predictive of leadership. Figures show that the price of producing an Air Force lieutenant via ROTC is about $77,000 (Grier, 1996). With an average annual enrollment similar to the current 13,813 Air Force ROTC students, the cost of producing commissioned officers over four years is considerable.

Human resource development professionals know competent leadership generates increased productivity, greater work quality, satisfaction among followers, and enhanced effort. Charisma was predicted from several variables including field training evaluations, GPA, AFOQT verbal scores, and AFOQT quantitative scores. This is of value to the field of HRD because the charismatic leader has a direct influence on improving organizational culture, motivating followers, earning respect and trust, and leading others to better performance. Koene, Pennings, and Schreuder (1992), for instance, found the charismatic style has a direct influence on improved organizational culture. Individualized consideration on self-evaluations was predicted from field training assessments. This is also important because leadership that use individualized consideration results in extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. Active and passive manage-by-exception were predicted by different independent variables (see Table 1). These two types of

transactional leadership are, according to Yammarino and Bass (1990), "a prescription for mediocrity or worse" (p. 152) because the leader intervenes only when necessary.

Overall, it looks like field training was the best predictor of transformational leadership, but not a very strong predictor of positive transactional leadership. Low AFOQT verbal scores were predictors of two positive leadership qualities while high verbal scores predicted two negative leadership qualities. High quantitative scores predicted both types of manage-by-exception.

Leader and subordinates do not view leadership consistently. Leaders assessed themselves higher than did subordinates on positive transformational and transactional leadership traits and lower on negative leadership traits. This suggests an inflated sense of leader accomplishment than may be realistic from a subordinates' assessment. If inaccurate self-evaluations, especially those that are inflated, are not corrected they could cause several problems. First, if a leader does not perceive weaknesses, he or she will not be aware that changes in behavior are needed. Second, those individual leaders who provide inaccurate self-ratings are found to be poorer performers than those who provide accurate ratings (Atwater & Yammarino, 1993; Bass & Yammarino, 1990). Third, reaction to feedback are influenced by self-assessments or, in other words, leaders may be less likely to seek evaluative information that is useful.

Neither gender or ethnicity were factors in leadership assessment by self or peer. Past research suggested that minorities and women are accorded differential treatment compared to their white counterparts in organizations. This differential treatment takes many forms, including the fact that minorities and women are not readily or fully accepted into existing informal social and informational networks (Fernandez, 1981; Nixon, 1985). This point is of special importance because access to and use of informal social networks are important factors that influence, not only organizational advancement but also the ability to secure needed organizational resources. This is significant to human resource development. Yet, unlike past research, this study suggests Air Force ROTC is both gender- and ethnic-neutral when it comes to observing leadership. That is, leaders nor followers rated women or minorities any differently than males or Caucasians.

In general, the Air Force Selection System is not a strong predictor of leadership. Therefore, ROTC may not be selecting the persons most likely to be good leaders. However, it does appear that subordinates think that ROTC leaders are relatively high on transformational leadership characteristics, although leaders and subordinates do not agree on, specifically, who is high on transactional leadership.

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Moderators of Managerial Behavior Ratings: An Analysis From Multiple Perspectives

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Data from 223 managers, 1097 direct reports, 587 colleagues and 225 supervisors of a large U.K. communications organization collected during a developmental-based multi-rater feedback effort are used to examine potential moderators of (1) trends in managerial behavior ratings and (2) agreement among self and others' observations. Findings revealed significant effects with respect to type of rater, gender, tenure, and other variables. Implications of these results for using multi-rater feedback in organizational settings are discussed.

Since the early 1990s, multi-rater assessment methods and applications (also known as multi-source, multi-method, full-circle, 360-degree, and upward appraisal feedback) have made the transition from a seemingly new and exciting concept to a primary and often highly integrated element of an organization's developmental and/or performance management strategy (e.g., Antonioni, 1996; Church, Javitch & Burke, 1995; London & Beatty, 1993). As Hronec (1993) projected several years ago, performance measurement systems based on multiple perspectives such as these do indeed now represent the "vital signs" of our contemporary organizational experience. For example, a recent industry survey conducted by an external consulting firm (Mercer's Fax Facts..., 1996) based on responses from 201 different executives indicated that 29% percent of corporations are actively involved in and 11% are planning to use multi-rater technology for a variety of human resource development and performance management related initiatives. Other estimates are somewhere between 10% and 15% of all organizations, and the list of those currently using multi-rater methods include many of the most well known and successful companies (e.g., Church & Waclawski, 1998; Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Yammarino & Atwater, 1997). Moreover, various reviews and commentaries on both the popular and research literatures (e.g., Church & Bracken, 1997; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Tornow, 1993; Yammarino & Atwater, 1997) have suggested that the fascination with and deployment of multi-rater methodology has reached a critical mass among scientists and practitioners such that it should no longer be considered a "fad" but recognized instead as an important and inevitable element of individual development and appraisal systems for the future.

The popularity and utility of multi-rater systems are due in large part to the simple notion that behaviorally based information obtained from members of an manager's work team (including his or her direct reports, colleagues, and immediate or even dotted-line supervisors) in conjunction with feedback from his or her customers or clients represents a powerful and highly effective means for inducing individual behavioral change. Originally based on social psychological principles regarding change initially posited by Lewin (1958), recent conceptualizations of this process have incorporated the concept of managerial self-awareness as the means by which the change process occurs (e.g., Bracken, 1996; Church, 1994; Church & Bracken, 1997; Church & Waclawski, 1996, 1998; London & Wohlers, 1991; Yammarino & Atwater, 1993, 1997). Simply put, feedback about one's work-place behaviors, particularly when compared with self-perceptions, results in a process of enhanced self-awareness on the part of the focal individual, which in turn provides an impetus for behavioral change and development as well as future feedback-seeking behavior. Although this process has been one of the core assumptions behind a variety of OD and HRD related interventions over the years (e.g., Burke, Richley & DeAngelis, 1985; Bernardin, 1986; Daniel, 1985; Downham, Noel, & Prendergast, 1992; Nadler, 1977; Nowack, 1992; Shipper & Neck, 1990), it is only recently that the relationship between managerial self-awareness--as measured through self-others ratings congruence--and individual performance has been linked empirically across various samples of managers and in different industries (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Church, 1997, Furnham & Stringfield, 1994; Van Velsor, Taylor, & Leslie,

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1993). Moreover, findings from several longitudinal studies have suggested that exposure to multi-rater feedback may indeed have a significant impact on managerial behavior and self-awareness over time as well (e.g., Cheston, 1996; Hazucha, Hezlett, & Schneider, 1993; London & Wohlers, 1991).

Despite the popularity of multi-rater feedback systems in many organizations, however, a number of important and nagging issues still remain regarding both the measurement and implementation processes (e.g., Antonioni, 1996; Church & Bracken, 1997; Tornow, 1993). One of these concerns the basic assumption--derived in large part from classic measurement theory (Nunnally, 1978)--that multiple assessments from different sources (e.g., direct reports, colleagues, supervisors, clients) will result in more valid and reliable information pertaining to an individual's behavioral tendencies. Surprisingly enough, however, while ratings research has provided support for greater congruence in assessments from other sources as compared with any self vs. other comparison (e.g. Church, 1994; Church & Waclawski, 1997; Furnham & Stringfield, 1994; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Nowack, 1992; Riggio & Cole, 1992; Wohlers & London, 1989), these relationships remain relatively weak overall (e.g., r = .30). Moreover, as many practitioners and researchers have noted (e.g., Church & Bracken, 1997; Borman, White, Pulakos, & Oppler, 1991; Judge & Ferris, 1993; Landy & Farr, 1980; Mabe & West, 1982), our understanding of the key moderators in the self and others' rating process is still sorely limited. The literature regarding gender effects on behavioral ratings and self-other congruence, for example, is fraught with contradictory sets of results. While London and Wohlers (1991) found that women achieved higher congruence in self versus others' ratings than did men ($\underline{r}$ = .33, $\underline{r}$ = .22) particularly on items pertaining to interpersonal managerial relationships (e.g., communication and empowerment), Vecchio (1993) reported the opposite, with men achieving higher congruence than women ($\underline{r}$ = .07, $\underline{r}$ = .37 for females and males). Similar sets of mixed effects have been reported with respect to organizational tenure as well (e.g., Church, 1994).

Given these inconsistencies in the research literature coupled with a relative paucity of applied research using behavioral ratings from multiple sources and the rising usage of multi-rater feedback methodologies in organizations, the purpose of the following study is to contribute to our understanding of the rating process by providing an empirical investigation of the effect of several key individual level moderators (i.e., ratings source, gender, tenure in the organization, tenure in current job, frequency of workplace interaction) on behavior rating tendencies and self-other congruence. The results of this study are intended to assist OD and HRD practitioners in the effective use and interpretation of multi-rater methods in various organizational applications.

Method

The data used in the present study were collected over a 24 month period from managers (the focal individual), their direct reports, colleagues and supervisors from a large U.K. communications organization as part of a larger 360-degree feedback-based OD and HRD leadership development initiative. All focal individuals participated in a three-day residential developmental program designed to enhance their leadership and management skills. These programs were held in an offsite management training facility. Prior to attending the program, behavioral and performance ratings were obtained from the focal individuals and their co-workers for use during the training sessions. The data were ultimately delivered to participants during the program in the form of individualized feedback reports. Professionally trained staff provided individual coaching and counseling during the week to help participants understand and make effective use of the feedback.

All raters (including the focal managers) were informed of the developmental intent of the rating process and how the feedback would be used. They were instructed to be as candid in their assessments as possible. Raters were also told that no one in the organization other than the focal manager himself or herself would receive a copy of the results of their assessments. Further, direct reports and colleagues were also notified that their ratings would not be reported to the participant unless 3 or more responses were received from the same perspective, thus insuring the confidentiality of their individual responses. These tactics were employed with the intent of enhancing rater motivation and reducing instrumentation effects inherent in the rating process

(Bracken, 1996; Church, 1995a; Church & Waclawski, 1998; Harris, 1994; McIntyre, Smith, & Hassett, 1984; Ostroff, 1993).

In total, responses were received from 223 focal managers, 1097 of their direct reports, 587 of their colleagues, and 225 of their supervisors. Among the focal managers, 68% were male and 32% female. In terms of tenure, 10% had been with the organization for less than 1 year (at the time of the data collection), 18% had a tenure of 1 to 3 years, another 19% between 4 and 7 years, 11% between 8 and 10 years, 20% between 11 and 14 years, and 22% between 15 and 19 years. With respect to years in their current assignment, 7% had been there less than 6 months, 24% between 6 months and 1 year, 45% between 1 and 3 years, 21% between 4 and 9 years, and only 8% for 10+ years. Finally, based on a 5-point scale describing the frequency of workplace interaction to the focal manager being rated (where 1 = rarely and 5 = very often), the average contact ratings were 4.27 for direct reports, 3.71 for colleagues, and 4.54 for supervisors. These data would indicate that the observers in this sample worked with the focal individuals frequently and therefore were in a strong position to assess their workplace behaviors.

Data were collected using a 26 item custom-designed behaviorally based instrument constructed in collaboration with the OD department of the client organization. The inter-item reliability of the total instrument was quite strong among the total sample with .86 for self-ratings, .95 for averaged direct reports ratings, .93 for averaged colleague ratings, and .93 for supervisor ratings.

Analyses were conducted on these data using a total score for all 26 items to look for basic ratings trends, as well as the specific item-level to look for behavioral themes. Averaged ratings by source (e.g., for direct reports and for colleagues) were used for those individuals with more than one direct report or colleague responding. Self-other congruence (often an operationalization for managerial self-awareness) was computed using two different methods: (a) the collective level of agreement between self and others' ratings using a standard index of profile similarity *d*, i.e., the square root of the sum of squared differences between self and other (averages were used for direct reports rating the same individual) for each comparison item divided by the total number of items (e.g., Church, 1997; Nunnally, 1978; Tisak & Smith, 1994); and the three-group categorical agreement method (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Church, 1997; Van Velsor, et al., 1993) whereby participants are classified as being either under-raters, accurate-raters, or over-raters based on a comparison of total scores. Standard Pearson correlations were also performed for comparison purposes with prior research.

Results & Discussion

Findings are described according to two major categories of moderator analysis: Behavioral Tendencies and Ratings Congruence.

Behavioral Tendencies. First, a basic overall analysis of the summary scores by rater-type revealed that, as anticipated and consistent with prior research (e.g., Church, 1994, 1997; Church & Waclawski, 1996, 1997; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Mabe & West, 1982; Nowack, 1992; Van Velsor et al., 1993), self-ratings were significantly higher than those provided by direct reports or colleagues. Thus, these managers tended to rate themselves higher on average across all 26 behaviors compared with ratings received from their direct reports ($t = 5.83$, $p < .001$) or their colleagues ($t = 2.89$, $p < .01$). Interestingly enough, however, this effect was not replicated between self and supervisor ratings ($t = -1.35$, n.s.), which is somewhat divergent from prior research, particularly since the trend in mean scores here was for supervisor ratings to be slightly higher than even self-assessments. Despite this anomaly, which may reflect a cultural bias or some other type of leniency bias on the part of supervisors, correlations among self and other scores were consistently poor. In fact, there were no significant relationships between self-ratings and any others' set of assessments. As usual, however, correlations among other ratings sources were significant and in the typically reported range. Table 1 provides the detailed descriptive statistics for these summary variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Summary Ratings

	M	*SD*	*Self*	*Direct Reports*	*Colleagues*	*Supervisors*
Self	3.79	.35	.86			
Direct Reports	3.60	.41	.09	.95		
Colleagues	3.69	.40	.11	.30*	.93	
Supervisors	3.85	.48	.02	.22*	.27*	.93

Note: * $p < .01$, reliabilities are printed on the diagonal

Next, the data were examined for differences in ratings effects by each of the remaining potential individual moderators (i.e., gender, tenure in organization, tenure in current job, degree of exposure) for trends in the total scores as well as individual item level responses.

Although there were no significant general effects across the summary scores by gender and rater type, the trend was for women managers to received slightly higher or better ratings overall ($\underline{M}$ = 3.57 vs. $\underline{M}$ = 3.66, for males vs. females respectively). When examined at the item level using alpha controlled ANOVA models, however, a number of interesting and meaningful differences did emerge. More specifically, women managers were consistently significantly rated by their direct reports as being more adept at the communicative and facilitative aspects of managerial behavior (e.g., providing clarity, communicating openly, ensuring participation) as well as some of the more leadership or charismatic related aspects (e.g., standing up for principles, inspiring others, taking appropriate actions regarding poor performance) compared with male managers. Peers, on the other hand, rated women managers as being more encouraging of new ideas and focused on the development needs of their direct reports, compared with male managers. Interestingly enough, there were no significant differences in supervisor or self-ratings by gender. Table 2 provides an overview of these findings for each rating group. Clearly, among the present organization, women managers were seen as being more communicative, effective and inspiring compared with their male counterparts.

Table 2. Summary of ANOVA Results for Behavioral Items by Gender

Item Description	*Direct Reports*	*Colleagues*
2. You inspire others to perform at the highest level	5.79	
4. You stand up for what you believe	21.26	
6. You take appropriate action about poor performance	5.15	
9. You encourage others to invent new ways of doing things		5.29
17. You give direct reports the opportunity to learn things and try different activities on the job		5.48
18. You provide clarity about shared team goals	3.61	6.77
21. You ensure that all team members contribute to required courses of action	4.73	
24. You communicate in an open and direct manner	7.52	
25. You hold people accountable for prior agreements on performance issues		5.09

Note: All F's listed were significant at $p < .05$ or better.

Next, similar sets of analyses were conducted to explore the relationships among the variables of organizational tenure, job tenure and degree of contact with behavioral ratings. Given the scaling nature of these variables, correlations were examined first. Although there were no overall moderating effects with respect to the tenure of the focal manager, it was interesting to note that the longer the focal manager had been in his or her current position, the lower the supervisor generally rated him or her ($\underline{r}$ = -.19, $\underline{p} < .01$). With respect to frequency of contact, as perhaps might be expected from a human relations perspective, the more direct reports indicated they worked with the focal manager the higher they tended to rate him or her ($\underline{r}$ = .18, $\underline{p} < .01$). While

this pattern was not repeated with colleague ratings, it was present to a lesser degree among supervisor ratings as well ($r = .15$, $p < .05$).

When these data were examined further at the item level, the same general trends emerged particularly with respect to the contact variable. There were some interesting relationships worth exploring further, however, regarding organizational tenure and years in current job. More specifically, the longer managers had been with the organization or in their present job the lower they were rated by their direct reports on being innovative thinkers. This is reflected in ratings on items such as demonstrating new ways of thinking and acting ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$, $r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and constantly seeking to improve the way things are done ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$, $r = -.19$, $p < .01$). Although the pattern was similar for peer ratings, the correlations among this group were not strong enough to reach significance. Supervisor ratings, on the other hand, replicated the first set of trends as well as providing evidence of a host of other negative relationships including accomplishing high quality work within established time limits ($r = -.18$, $p < .05$, $r = -.27$, $p < .001$), contributing actively and openly to the team ($r = -.18$, $p < .05$, $r = -.21$, $p < .01$), and gathering relevant information for decision making ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$, $r = -.17$, $p < .05$). Clearly, these patterns would suggest that managers in the present sample who have been with the same organization and/or in their current jobs a long time tend be less interested in new ideas, are less interested in teamwork and focus more on other types of information (e.g., perhaps political or need based) when making decisions.

Rating Congruence. Finally, the data were examined for moderator influences of these same variables with respect to ratings congruence (a.k.a. managerial self-awareness). Surprisingly, however, no significant effects emerged when examining total score correlations using the profile similarity measure (*d*). Moreover, when these same data were examined using the three-category agreement approach (e.g., Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Church, 1997; Van Velsor, et al., 1993) to assessing self-awareness vis-à-vis ratings congruence, the same lack of findings were apparent. In short, none of the variables included in this study had any moderating impact on the relationship between the similarity in self versus others' ratings. Although this trend is consistent with at least one prior study (e.g., Church, 1997), and does add support to the arguably inherent nature of the construct of managerial self-awareness—i.e., the ability to assess one's own behaviors and the impact those behaviors have on others—it is nonetheless disappointing to be unable to shed any additional light on the relatively large gap between self and others' assessments.

It should be noted, however, that levels of congruence among the present sample as measured by the profile similarity measure were considerably better or greater than have typically been seen in prior research (e.g., Cheston, 1996; Church, 1994, 1997; Church & Waclawski, 1996, 1997), and that when compared with either direct reports or colleague ratings, approximately 40% of these respondents would be considered as accurate or self-aware raters. Given that these profile similarity scores were quite similar to those of a high-performing rather than average manager sample across 4 different datasets (see Church, 1997), perhaps the focal individuals in the present study were simply more self-aware and/or skilled in self-assessment than is typically the case and therefore presented more of a restricted range in scores.

Summary

In general the results of this study suggest that there are a number of important moderators that can impact the behavioral rating process. Although it is unclear at this point whether or not the effects identified here will generalize to other populations, it was apparent that among this sample of 223 managers in the U.K. that rating source, gender, tenure and frequency of contact or interaction all play a significant part in understanding the types of ratings received. More specifically, while direct reports and colleagues were generally more critical when providing lower scores overall, women were seen as being more facilitative, communicative and inspirational in their managerial approach by direct reports than were men. In terms of tenure, the data indicated that those individuals who had been in their positions longer were less interested in exploring new approaches to doing work and were less team and participatively focused. Finally, as might be

expected, the more people work together the better the individual items ratings tended to be, at least among assessments received by direct reports and supervisors.

If we take these findings as indicative of larger, more encompassing, trends the following cautions or recommendations would apply to the use of multi-rater feedback related applications in development and performance management settings:

1. Overall strengths and weaknesses by gender for a given population should be examined so that differential developmental plans, support processes and resources can be provided. For example, while the present feedback system was intended to develop leadership skills, the data point to very different types of follow-up interventions for men vs. women managers.

2. The common assumption that older managers may be more resistant to change is probably grounded at least in part in reality, particularly when considering the relationship between age and organizational tenure. Based on the data here, it would seem as though the longer the tenure in a current position the more likely that individual will need additional support and skill building to move beyond his or her current situation and field of vision.

3. With respect to collecting data for multi-rater feedback initiatives, it is important to assess the degree of contact with an individual. Given the positive findings bias noted here, it may be necessary to instruct individuals prior to survey administration to chose a selection of raters (e.g., direct reports and colleagues) with whom they have worked well and those with whom they have had difficulties in order to maximize the quality of their feedback. Moreover, future feedback delivery systems may want to consider providing separate feedback or weighting systems based this type of information. Besides the enhanced self-awareness process, another of the key assumptions behind multi-rater feedback is that raters will provide accurate rather than biased assessments of an individual's behavior. These data would suggest that exposure may lead to positively biased ratings which may need to be corrected.

4. People appear to differ on the skill or trait of managerial self-awareness at an individual rather than a demographic level. No significant, easily quantifiable moderators of the self-others rating gap appear to be forthcoming.

Limitations & Suggestions for Future Research

There are several limitations to this research that limit the generalizability of the results presented. First, only one organization was studied. While this specific organization does represent one of the most well respected communications organizations in the U.K., it does not necessarily reflect organizations in other types of industries or countries. Future research should focus on testing the moderating effects exhibited here across a variety of other types of institutions. It may be the case, for example, that more service oriented firms yield very different types of patterns among ratings.

Another limitation of this research is the specific nature and size of the sample studied. Although based on ratings for a large sample of individual managers attending a feedback-based development program, the trends in these data may not reflect processes operating in the entire organization system. Perhaps only the most effective managers were willing or able to participate in this program, or perhaps only those most in need of assistance with their leadership style. While the program was open for two years to anyone interested, there may have been an inherent self-selection effect involved. Again, future research with other populations is needed in order to support or refute these findings.

Finally, the results described above would be more meaningful if they could have been linked directly to hard performance measures. Prior research, for example, has linked specific managerial behaviors to net profit and customer service measures in the financial (Waclawski, 1996) and in the airline service industries (e.g., Church, 1995b), as well as with respect to managerial self-awareness (Church, 1997).

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A Case Study: Employee Perceptions of the Efficacy of 360 Degree Feedback at a Large Midwestern Utility

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The purpose of this case study was to examine the design, efficacy, and compatibility of a 360 degree feedback system with organizational objectives at the organizational, departmental, and individual levels. Interviews were conducted with management and associates alike. Findings indicate unanimous perceptions among associates that 360 supports the accomplishment of organizational objectives at all levels while perceptions among persons in management were mixed. The 360 design process is documented and discussed. Implications and recommendations stemming from this particular design are noted.

The nature of evaluation within organizations is changing. Although the concept of feedback is not new to the field of evaluation, it is now being used as a formal component in employee performance appraisals (Bohl, 1996). The process for collecting this type of feedback has several names including: upward feedback, full circle feedback, multi-rater feedback, multi-source feedback, or most popularly, 360 degree feedback. The name is acquired through the process it implies. Simply put, 360 degree feedback involves collecting feedback on an employee's performance behaviors to include the following perspectives: top-down, peer, and bottom-up. Sometimes, this process can even include collecting external customer input (Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Timmerick & Bracken, 1997).

In traditional work environments with top-down organizational structures, employee performance appraisals were delivered one-way and conducted on an annual basis (Budman & Rice, 1994; Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Hoffman, 1995). Within this top-down structure managers typically critiqued supervisors or supervisors critiqued direct reports. Often, performance appraisals were tied to employee pay and promotion and directly affected compensation (Edwards & Ewen, 1996). However, with the rise of global competition in the early 1980's, organizations transitioned to flatter and less hierarchical structures (Kanter, 1989; Senge, 1990). As a result, managerial and supervisory roles began to change within organizations as team structures and decentralization efforts replaced older, hierarchical models (Kanter, 1989; Timmreck & Bracken, 1997; Witherspoon & White, 1997).

Because of the evolution of organizational power structures, managers and supervisors lack the power they once had to extend control and influence over employees. This has rendered the traditional performance appraisal process in need of change (Bohl, 1996; Budman & Rice, 1994; Filipczak, Hequet, Lee, Picard & Stamps, 1996; Fitzgerald, 1995: Schellhardt, 1996). The importance of feedback emerged as powerful tool for shaping employee behavior as companies began to recognize its developmental value (Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Timmerick & Bracken, 1997). A recent survey of 756 companies reflects the new stance many companies are assuming in placing a greater degree of importance on 360. Bohl (1996) reported that 22% of the respondents indicated they were using some form of 360 degree feedback. This same survey reported comparisons between companies that used some form of 360 degree feedback to those who used "supervisor only" appraisals. The study found that 360 improves: employee understanding and self awareness, communication between supervisor and staff, changes in work behavior, and performance results. Overall, the companies who used 360 demonstrated higher levels of agreement about the effectiveness of 360 over the older, "supervisor only" appraisal (Bohl, 1996)

Although 360 degree feedback continues to gain in popularity within the workplace as a component in the evaluation process, a particular area of concern is its application within the context of the larger organization as related to employee development (Tornow,1997).

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Specifically, employee development systems relating 360 degree feedback to organizational goals and objectives need to be examined. The efficacy of 360 as a component of the overall employee development system as it relates to current practices and policies within organizations remains unclear (Tornow,1997). Employee development plans are effective to the degree that they are systematically linked with the overall mission, vision, and strategy of their teams, departments, business units and overall corporate structure. There is a need to better understand how 360 degree feedback fits with the larger organizational system (Tornow, 1997). The purpose of this study is to examine at an exploratory level the efficacy and linkage of 360 degree feedback (referred to throughout the remainder of this paper as Full Circle Feedback (FCF) for the purposes of discussing the specific case study) for employee developmental purposes as it relates to larger organizational goals in a large midwestern utility company. This study is important for two reasons. First, it is of interest to the utility industry. As the industry undergoes deregulation, many utility companies are seeking out means for transitioning toward a more competitive environment. This study reports employee perceptions regarding the efficacy of 360 in helping to accomplish organizational objectives. The results may be helpful to human resource development (HRD) practitioners for developing 360 programs in other utility companies. Secondly, it is apparent that there is little formal research on how 360 degree feedback is used for employee development with respect to the larger organizational goals and objectives (Tornow, 1997). Nonetheless, human resource (HR) professionals continue to use 360 degree feedback as an input to personnel decisions related to pay or promotion. For example, Bohl (1996) reported that 90% of the organizations using 360 degree feedback did so to assist in making personnel decisions. With so little known about 360 degree feedback and its increasing use, this study provides only preliminary data as to how 360 degree feedback fits into the larger organizational system of a large midwestern utility company. As a result, HRD practitioners and researchers will be better equipped to understand and further investigate how 360 feedback helps to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

Research Questions

1. What design process was used to link FCF with organizational goals?
2. How has FCF supported organizational objectives at the organization level?
3. How has FCF supported organizational objectives at the department level?
4. How has FCF supported organizational objectives at the individual level?
5. To what extent is FCF compatible with the overall goals of the organization?

Research Design

This research assumed a case study design (Cresswell, 1994) at an exploratory level. The methodology involved conducting interviews with each participant. Criteria for selection included: involvement in the FCF program for over one year and a willingness to participate in the study. Individuals who had been formally involved in the company's FCF program for over one year were then chosen. An internal coordinator from the utility company ensured that the stated criteria were fulfilled. The participants represented upper and middle management, and front line employees who had received FCF reports. Data collected from the interviews provided rich verbal descriptions containing qualitative data in the form of case study narratives and content analysis. This data indicated the ways in which 360 degree feedback has been used for career development with respect to the accomplishment of organizational objectives. This study however, was limited in several ways. First, 360 degree feedback has multiple applications and this study investigated only one application: 360 degree feedback as it is used at the individual level to provide feedback regarding employee job behaviors. Therefore, research results are limited in that they will offer insight regarding this specific application of 360 and none other. Also, because this was an exploratory case study the results are not generalizable to the organization or a larger population.

The subjects chosen for this study were employees of a large midwestern utility company who had participated in the design of the FCF process or had received FCF reports as a result of

their involvement within the company's FCF program. Chosen using purposive sampling, the subjects consisted of 10 individuals who had been formally involved in the company's FCF program for over one year or had participated in the FCF design process at its inception. All ten of the subjects who were chosen participated in the data collection process. The subjects represented three different business units from three different locations across the company. Three managers, two supervisors, and five associates participated in the study.

A structured interview guide was designed to assist in collecting the data from the interviews. This guide was designed to answer seven areas of interest related to the study. The first question asked for the participant to identify the goals and needs of the organization. Question two asked the participant to identify the goals and needs of their department or team. Question three identified in what ways the 360 degree feedback program supports or facilitates the accomplishment of organizational objectives. Question four asked to what extent the full circle feedback program is compatible with organizational goals and needs. Question five identified how effective the feedback program has been in helping each individuals to develop job behaviors in accordance with organizational goals and needs. Question six identified the efficacy of the feedback program for helping individuals to help other individuals develop job behaviors in accordance with organizational goals and needs. Finally, an additional set of questions were designed to identify the FCF design process.

Initial contact with representatives of the utility company was made through the company's FCF director in person at a conference on 360 degree feedback. In late June and early July, by telephone and email, appointments were arranged with select research participants. Following selection and scheduling, each participant received notice of their selection and appointment through an internal coordinator. All participant involvement occurred on a voluntary basis. Interviews were conducted on site, face-to face or by phone at the company's corporate headquarters. During August of 1997 the interviewer took extensive short hand notes and transcribed them verbatim after each set of interviews.

Verbal descriptions gathered during the data collection efforts were entered into a word processing tabular format and coded by employee status (Borg & Gall, 1996). Emergent themes were categorized. These categories were then entered into a spreadsheet and were then analyzed for frequency.

Results

The results of this study are discussed in five major sections: (1) an analysis of the FCF design process, (2) the efficacy of FCF in supporting organizational objectives at the organizational level, (3) the efficacy of FCF in supporting organizational objectives at the departmental level, (4) the efficacy of FCF in supporting organizational objectives at the individual level, and (5) the extent to which FCF is perceived to be compatible with organizational goals and needs.

Analysis of the FCF design process. A number of methods exist for designing 360 degree feedback programs (Jones & Bearly, 1996). Importantly, the efficacy of this particular 360 degree feedback program is, in part, driven from its design. In order to better understand why or why not this particular FCF program was perceived to be effective by employees, an analysis of the design is presented along with employee perceptions. The anaylsis, presented in conjunction with employee perceptions, provides some insight as to how improve the efficacy of future designs. Six segments of the design process for this particular program were identified to include: stakeholder identification, design procedures, linkage of items to organizational needs, piloting and feedback, training, and employee development. Each of these six segments are discussed and analyzed.

Stakeholder identification. Six key stakeholders or groups of stakeholders were identified at the inception of the design process. These included the HR manager, the HR personnel director, exempt personnel, non-exempt personnel, the manager of training and development, and an outside consulting firm.

Design Procedures. A leadership survey was first developed by the training and development department. Items contained in this survey reflected practical skills associated with good leaders such as "effective team member" skills. The survey was then distributed company wide to employees across the organization. Feedback from the survey was then used to determine what employees characterized as a good "leader" within their organization. This feedback was then used to develop a classification of competencies for employees. These competencies were then translated into FCF survey items. An initial pilot program was constructed to test the final FCF instrument. Unspecified, but appropriate statistical analysis were said to be used to determine which items from the initial feedback were to be included on the final instrument.

Linking FCF design to organizational goals and needs. Two major actions were taken by the design team to link FCF design with the goals and needs of the organization. The first was seeking out employee input and inviting employee participation in the initial phases of FCF construction. Although the training and development team created a survey typical of most organizational leadership profiles, this action was important in that they sought out employee opinion as to which skills were perceived to be critical to them. Secondly, employees were asked what a future picture of the organization would look like in the year 2000. From this picture, two more categories were identified by the design team: diversity and communication.

Piloting and feedback. The FCF instrument was then piloted with an initial group of supervisors. Employees were asked how well they could rate each other on the items presented. Final item selection was then determined based upon employee feedback gathered during the pilot.

Training. The training efforts employed during implementation were substantial. First all employees were required to go through a two hour workshop on FCF. A variety of skits and role plays were used to help employees understand the difference between FCF and traditional performance appraisals. Thirteen internal trainers participated in the delivery of these workshops. Key points emphasized in the training were that FCF offered more perspectives and more data towards the description of an individual's job performance. Moreover, a sample report was presented in each training session. Trainees were taught to look for trends, agreement, and discrepancies in the reports. For feedback and review, trainees were told to select two positive items and one improvement item. These items would then be used as a basis for discussion during feedback sessions. A trainer's guide was developed to aid in FCF administration for supervisors and managers.

Developmental outcomes. Employees were given the feedback reports. Feedback sessions between employees and managers or supervisors were not required and were left as optional. No employee was required to share the contents of his/her report with anyone else. Although each employee was given the option to share feedback with an internal "coach". For those employees who shared their results, many of them used the report as a basis for an individual development plan. Development plans were based upon feedback while individual and departmental goals were used as a basis for goal setting and future development. Time and financial resources were offered by many "coaches" to demonstrate organizational commitment to employee development. The final page of the report contained a "pseudo-contract" where employees and supervisors could sign their names as part of a psychological contract between the employee and the organization.

Efficacy of FCF in accomplishing objectives at the organizational level. Responses at the organizational level were divided into two general categories. The first category identified those responses in which participants perceived that FCF *did support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the organizational level. The second category identified responses in which the participants *did not perceive FCF to support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the organizational level. Responses from category one are reported first.

Seven participants reported that FCF supported the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the organizational level while 3 did not. Interestingly, all 3 of the participants reporting that FCF did not support organizational objectives were in a management or supervisory position. This is not to say that all managers and supervisors felt this way. Two claimed that FCF did support the accomplishment of objectives. Significantly, no associate reported negative

perceptions about FCF's capability to support organizational objectives. Instead, all five associates reported that FCF supported organizational objectives.

Five participant responses indicated FCF to be effective because it provided input from many different levels within the organization, i.e. peers, supervisors, and subordinates. Three participant responses indicated FCF to be effective at the organizational level in that it helped individuals develop within the company. An explanation was attached to this response however. These participants felt that individual employee performance dictated organizational success. And because they believed FCF to be an aid in improving overall individual effectiveness, they in turn, reasoned that the company would benefit at the organizational level to the extent the employees were developed. Other data supporting FCF at the organizational level included the perception that FCF reinforced the achievement of business results. Also, two participants reported that they viewed FCF as an integral portion of the performance management system. Responses from category two are presented next.

Three respondents, all of whom were in management or supervisory positions, reported that FCF did not support organizational objectives at the organizational level. These participants saw the empirical data included in a report as "too soft" or "meaningless". Several times these respondents broached the question "so what if I get a '7' or an '8' on my report—what does the difference mean?". For those responding in this way, they believed FCF to have minimal value for the organization because they saw no value in reporting the small differences in scores. In addition, supervisors and associates alike reported that many did not know what to do with the report once they received it. One respondent in a supervisory position reported that the peer results could not mean anything because peers are in competition with each other for promotion, so there is no point in seeking out peer input because it will be politically distorted. Finally, two supervisors reported that FCF had no meaning attached to it because there was no accountability associated with the report.

Efficacy of FCF in accomplishing objectives at the departmental level. Responses at the departmental level were divided into two general categories. The first category identified those responses in which participants perceived that FCF *did support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the departmental level. The second category identified responses in which the participants *did not perceive FCF to support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the departmental level. Responses from category one are reported first.

Managers, supervisors, and associates reported that FCF supported the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the departmental level. Five of the respondents claimed that FCF was supportive because it offered inputs from peers, supervisors, and subordinates. When asked why this was perceived as helpful to the organization, these respondents explained that the increased number of perspectives contributing to the report offered a better description of an individual's performance at the departmental level. In addition, three respondents indicated that because FCF helped to develop employees as individuals, the larger organization stood to benefit from any individual development. In this case, participants argued, the organization benefited at the department level from the ensuing levels of individual development. Two respondents further reported that FCF supported organizational objectives in that the reports helped participants to identify areas for improvement on an interdepartmental basis. These participants explained that interdepartmental feedback is becoming increasingly important for departments. They explained that currently departments are "held captive" in providing services and are thus forced conduct business with each other. In the future, participants indicated, this would not be the case. As a result, feedback regarding the improvement of interdepartmental services is gaining a greater significance. Finally, one respondent felt that the FCF promoted a greater level of openness throughout the organization. Responses from category two are reported in the following paragraph.

Only managers and supervisors reported that FCF does not support organizational objectives at the departmental level. Three explained that they felt the system was again, "too soft" and that the differences in scores did not mean anything and therefore could not be supportive of organizational objectives. At least two managers/supervisors reported FCF to be too general to

measure anything from department to department. These participants identified FCF as not being valid because the way in which organizational objectives were achieved varied greatly from one department to another. These participants further explained that a "one size fits all" approach simply could not effectively gauge employee effectiveness across departments equally as well. Lastly, one respondent questioned FCF's ability to contribute to the organization due to suspicions of employee collusion.

Efficacy of FCF in accomplishing objectives at the individual level. Responses at the individual level were divided into two general categories. The first category identified those responses in which participants perceived that FCF *did support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the individual level. The second category identified responses in which the participants *did not perceive FCF to support or facilitate* the accomplishment of organizational objectives at the individual level. Responses from category one are reported next.

Data largely supported FCF as a mechanism helping to accomplish organizational objectives at the individual level. These findings included responses from managers, supervisors, and associates. Subjects reported that FCF aided in the accomplishment of objectives for two reasons which were discussed in the preceding two sections. Five of the responses supported the first reason and three responses supported the second. These two reasons were: first, FCF offered input from a variety of perspectives, that is, supervisory, peer, and subordinate levels and second, the individual development gained through FCF in some way ultimately impacted the larger organization. Moreover, five participants believed that FCF facilitated individual career development, while three respondents indicated that the feedback helped to identify individual areas for improvement. In addition, three respondents reported that the anonymity associated with FCF helped them to voice issues which might have remained unaddressed. While other comments offered by respondents indicated that FCF was helpful in revealing unseen or "blind" areas to individuals. Also, one respondent felt that FCF demonstrated management concern in regard to employee input and opinion. Lastly, one associate offered a particularly insightful response. The respondent shared that FCF helped him to remember the skills he had learned in training. And because he was continually assessing other people on these skills, this process helped to raise his own individual levels of awareness as to how to best apply those skills within the organization. Responses for category two follow.

Only management and supervisory personnel reported that FCF did not support organizational objectives at the individual level. In general, respondents in this category reported similar responses as previously described at the group and organizational levels.

Specifically, three respondents reported that again, the system was just "too soft" and therefore was not supportive of organizational objectives. One respondent reported that the mechanism was extremely burdensome. This particular respondent had well over fifteen reports to complete within less then a one month time period. Other respondents were confused as to how to rate people. They complained that there was no standard way to fill out the report, yet the end result depended on a standard rating method. Finally, concerns regarding reprisal were voiced. One respondent was concerned that if someone did not like you they would now have the chance to screw you.

FCF's compatibility with organizational goals and needs. Employees were also asked to report on the overall compatibility of FCF in relation to organizational goals and needs. In general, 7 of the respondents reported that FCF was compatible, while 2 of the respondents reported that it was not compatible. One respondent did not answer. Managers, supervisors, and associates reported FCF to be compatible with organizational goals and needs. Only managers and supervisors reported that FCF was not compatible with organizational goals and needs. Responses reporting that FCF was compatible with the organizational goals and needs are reported first.

Four of the respondents reported that it was "very compatible in that it reflects what is important to the organization by bringing it down to each level within the organization." Three responses reported FCF's compatibility with overall organizational goals and needs but did so without any common theme. And while a majority of the responses reported favorable perceptions

towards compatibility they seemed to vary in their level of support. One respondent reported that "FCF is one hundred percent compatible with the goals and needs of the organization." Another respondent suggested that it was compatible, but it could become more compatible as FCF administrators refined the process. Responses reporting that FCF was not compatible with organizational goals and needs are reported next.

Two respondents fell into this category. One reported that FCF is not compatible because no accountability is associated with it. Another respondent claimed the results simply "don't mean anything".

Discussion

This research provides preliminary data regarding the efficacy of 360 within one organization at three different levels, managerial and employee perceptions regarding the compatibility of FCF with organizational goals, and an analysis of the FCF design process within a midwestern utility. A discussion of each of these three areas is presented. Implications for HRD practitioners and researchers follow.

Linking the FCF design process to organizational goals and needs. One finding resulting from this study revealed that this design process incorporated the widespread use of employee input. This finding more than likely explains the high degree of perception regarding FCF's compatibility with organizational goals. The process sought out stakeholder input from program's inception. As a result, it is not surprising that the a majority of participants perceived FCF to be effective although some managers and supervisors reported it to be ineffective. Critical to the design, was linking FCF with organizational goals through the use of surveys and pilot studies. This information played an important role in producing a valid FCF design. A second finding resulting from this study is that FCF instruments should be customized for each individual department. Managers and supervisors frequently complained that FCF did not support organizational objectives because it was design was too general and not specific enough. In this study only one instrument was created to meet the development needs of the entire organization.

Efficacy of FCF in helping to accomplish objectives at the organizational level, departmental, and individual level. A third finding resulting from this study is that only managers and supervisors reported that FCF did not support organizational objectives at the organizational level. Similarly, this perception followed suit at the departmental and individual levels. But not all managers and supervisors shared the same perceptions. Several managers and supervisors consistently indicated that FCF did support the accomplishment of objectives at the various levels. All associates however, reported FCF to support the accomplishment of objectives at all levels within the organization. A fourth finding from this study showed that the perceived efficacy of FCF varied at each of the three organizational levels between associates and management. Although a more rigorous study of these variables needs to be undertaken before any formidable conclusions can be made, associates perceived FCF to support the accomplishment of objectives at all levels, but that FCF had it's greatest impact at the individual level. Perceptions of management were mixed however. Three respondents in management positions consistently reported that FCF did not support the accomplishment of organizational, departmental, and individual objectives, while two did. Overall, the majority of the respondents (7) reported perceptions that FCF did support the accomplishment of objectives at all three levels, thus seeming to serve its purpose as an individual development tool systematically aligned with the larger organization.

Several possibilities emerge to explain these findings. First, managers and supervisors relied heavily on the same rationale at all levels in the organization for reporting that FCF did not support the accomplishment of objectives. Common to each of the three levels was the response that the data was "too soft". Second, fears of employee collusion and reprisal were reported in two of the three categories as well. But is this so surprising? Managers and supervisors are frequently required to make personnel decisions based on performance appraisals. Though the FCF program is not connected to performance appraisal at this point in this organization, managers and supervisors could be voicing early concerns regarding FCF's capability to produce appraisals which

yield data that provide meaningful deference for promotional purposes. Additionally, it must be awkward for someone who has risen to a management or supervisory position under a traditional performance appraisal system to adapt to something as threatening as 360. Moreover, it is possible that managers or supervisors feel that the "rules" for making it to the top are changing. After all, current managers and supervisors were promoted under the older appraisal systems. The changes may be difficult to accept. But even so, some managers seem to be adapting. Two of the managers and supervisors in this study seemed to embrace the FCF program, even to the point of sharing their reports with subordinates. From the researcher's perspective, these interviews seemed to be more open in their tone and flavor, whereas the interviews with managers and supervisors who reported doubts and concerns with FCF seemed to assume a more defensive posture.

FCF's compatibility with organizational goals and needs. The fifth finding resulting from this study was that the majority of respondents, 70%, found FCF to be compatible with the goals and objectives of the organization. The results show that FCF is perceived to be systematically linked with the goals of the larger organization. Though this is only one case study conducted at an exploratory level, these findings do suggest that the FCF program is vital for helping individuals develop in ways which are congruent with larger organizational goals.

Implications and Recommendations

Findings present several implications and recommendations for HRD practitioners and researchers alike. This information will be useful to consultants or persons in management considering implementing 360 programs. Researchers interested in the administration and efficacy of 360 degree feedback programs may also benefit.

Linking the FCF design process to organizational goals. This study analyzed the FCF design methodology used in one organization. Though this design was effective for this organization, it may be found to be ineffective in another. As a result, implications for practitioners may include learning a variety of 360 degree feedback design processes across a variety of organizational situations so that 360 degree feedback efficacy can be achieved in multiple and dissimilar organizational settings and structures. Recommendations for practitioners include learning a variety of 360 degree feedback design processes and then choosing the one which best fits the developmental needs of personnel and aligns most accurately with the larger organization. Additionally, practitioners should seek to customize 360 programs at the departmental level in order to better meet the needs of managers and employees alike. In this way they can successfully avoid complaints concerned with face validity issues brought on by the "one size fits all" perceptions .

Efficacy of FCF in helping to accomplish objectives at the organizational level, departmental, and individual level. Implications as determined by this study indicate that HRD practitioners need to spend more time identifying the concerns of managers and supervisors when developing 360 programs. The data indicates two different perspectives from two sets of stakeholders, that is managers/supervisors and associates. The tension resulting between the two sets of stakeholders most probably originates from the role differences between management and associates. Managers have a need to make decisions regarding pay and promotions. Ultimately, this calls for them to identify and then discriminate between levels of employee performance to provide justification for promotion or demotion. Employees however, need feedback for growth and development. Although this explanation can not entirely explain the differences in stakeholder perceptions, it does imply that HRD practitioners need to better understand the utility issues associated with different stakeholders at different levels within the organization when designing 360 programs. Recommendations for practitioners include a need to more accurately identify the needs and concerns of management when designing a 360 program. Also, greater attention needs to be given for increasing corroboration between management's need for evaluation and employee's need for feedback, growth and development.

FCF's compatibility with organizational goals and needs. Findings suggest that FCF is a tool which is compatible with helping employees develop while simultaneously achieving organizational goals and maintaining organizational alignment. As demonstrated, a majority of

employees interviewed felt that FCF was compatible with the goals of the organization. As a result, implications for practitioners may include conducting 360 programs with greater frequency. While many 360 programs are conducted on an annual basis, perhaps they need to be conducted more often if greater levels of employee development are to be attained. Although this may present administrative problems for organizations, the resulting implication can not be easily dismissed for logistical reasons alone. What if a coach only talked to an athlete once each season about his/her performance because it required too much time? If feedback cycles were steeped up, perhaps greater levels of individual development could be achieved through increased dialogue regarding performance. Recommendations for practitioners include conducting 360 programs more frequently while continuing to develop 360 programs which are in touch with organizational goals and needs.

Implications for future research on 360 degree feedback may include conducting more research on this same set of research questions with a larger sample size across several organizations. At an exploratory level, preliminary data suggests that FCF is an employee developmental system which is in alignment with larger organizational goals. However, more data is needed to substantiate and confirm these findings.

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